CHAPTER VI

SATGURU RAM SINGH

(A biographical Sketch)

POLITICAL

by

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According to the police reports of 1867 and 1868 regarding the origin of the history of the Namdhari Sect, "..... Ram Singh was looked upon as a successor or actual re-embodiment of Guru Nanak, the Saint. He was now the representative of Guru Gobind, the warrior ....."[1] He was further reported to be visiting officials in state, attended by half-a-dozen horsemen followed by scores of men on foot. He came to the room surrounded by a Court like a prince. He and his people were dressed in equisitely fine white clothes.

In the words of Ahluwalia, "Nearly one month before the outbreak of the rebellion of 1857, Guru Ram Singh raised a new flag to be upheld, uttered a new pledge to be fulfilled and saw a new vision to be realised."[2] Panjab at that time was facing the fiercest challenge from Christianity. Various Missionary Societies had initiated work at Simla, Amritsar, Peshawar, Kangra and Ludhiana.

Writing about Guru Ram Singh in 1867, the Rev. J.S. Woodside of the Ludhiana Mission stated : "..... ..... Such is the individual who has already got altogether a sect of over 100,000 men, and it is for the Government to determine whether it is safe for a man who wields such enormous power as does Ram Singh, to wander about the country, a sort of demi-god for the people to fall down and worship."[3]

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1. Home Dept. Jud. Br., Cons.Nos. 112-132. June 1872. Memorandum on Ram Singh, Kuka by J.W. Mc Nabb, Offtg. Commissioner, Ambala.
2. Kukas, the freedom fighters of the panjab., Introductory, p. 3.
3. Panjab: past and present - Vol. VII. Foreign Missionary Vol. XXVI - 1867-68. p. 67 quoted.

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While the missionaries built new Churches in the land of the Gurus; they expressed consternation at the work of the Kuka leader. They could not appreciate that "Kukaism was initiated in order to dispel darkness to denounce social weakeness, to meet the cnallenge of an overpowering Western Imperialism, and to forge the lands of religious purity and brotherhood."(1) Guru Ram Singh was only a true embodiment of this resurgent movement, initiated by Guru Balak Singh of Huzroo. It was his firm view "that the real cause of the degradation of the society and of the loss of independence in the panjab, as in other parts of India, was the fall of morel and spiritual volues."(2)

Early life:- Ram Singh was born in 1816, on Basant panchami day, in the house of Jassa Singh, in a small village of Bhaines, sixteen miles from Ludhiana.(3) His ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ father, by profession a carpenter, held a key position in his village; combining many functions in his singular personality. His village shop and the workship had become a meeting place for the village folk. As soon as Ram Singh attained the age of nine, he started helping his father in his profession in many ways.

Having learned Gurmukhi from his mother Sada Kaur, a pious lady, Ram Singh evinced a taste, from the early childhood, for memorising the "Bani". His

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1. Kukas,, pp. 2-3. Introductory.
2. Fauja Singh Bajwa., Kuka Movement, p. 16.
3. Gooroo Ram Singh and the Kuka Sikhs; Documents Documents 1867-71, No. XI. A. (ed) Nahar Singh

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mother reared him by reciting the verses from the Granth Saheb; and by narrating to him the heroic deeds of the Gurus. Being the eldest child in the family, Ram Singh was respected by his youngers. His brother Budh Singh, was younger to him by four years; and his sister was married. In such a congenial family atmosphere Ram Singh's character was moulded in a cast of which purity of sentiment, sublimity of action, and fearlessness of conduct were the essential attributes."[1]

2. In the Army: - Through the efforts of his brother-in-law, Kabul Singh, who was employed in the artillery department of Maharaja Ranjeet, Ram Singh joined the Khalsa army in 1836 as a sowar in Nao Nihal Singh's Regiment.[2] He was 5 ft. 10 inches; fairish complexion, pitted with small-pox; hakel eyes; long nose and face; grizzled ~~mkkk~~ beard and moustache .....[3]

Even in the army Ram Singh kept alive the religious fervour and felt alarmed at the prevailing moral degeneration in the post - annexation Panjab. Having realised the dangers of the internal weakness of the Sikh community and the Khalsa, he became regular in his prayers. His pious demeanour and strong character impressed his colleagues in the army very much. In course of time his Regiment came to be known as the Saint's Regiment.[4]

It was during this preiod of service in the Army, that Ram Singh came under the influence of the Kuka movement, initiated by Baba Balak Singh of Huzro in 1847.

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1. Ahluwalia, M.M., Kukas. p. 41. Also Namdhari Itihas pt. I. p. 85.
2. Gooroo Ram Singh and the Kuka Sikhs - Documents 1863-71. p. 29. fn. not 1844. Hereafter referred to only as Documents.
3. Nahar Singh, Gooroo Ram Singh: Documents p. 2 (1863-1871) and also Documents. pp. 258-259 (1872); The The Englishman (Calcutta), dt. March 14, 1872 quoted.
4. Ahluwalia, M.M., Kukas. p. 42.

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This movement popularly known as the NAMDHARI - developed into a far more dynamic upsurge. It came to be called a KOOKA movement, because its devotee members used to shout and scream - KOOK (कूक) - when they were in ecstacy. Its inspirations came from Bhagat Jawahar Mal of Rawalpindi, who in his turn initiated Bala Balak Singh, near Campbellpore.(1) (now in West Punjab - Pakistan) It was universally claimed by the Namdharis that "the Gurushipwas conferred by the Tenth Guru on Guru Balak Singh of Huzro who passed it on to Guru Ram Singh."(2)

3 Abondons Soldiering: - The death of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh plunged the Sikh State into worst turmoil . Rot and decay, coupled with personal rivalries led to murder after murder. The authorities of the East India Company took advantage of the situation and war became inevitable. Ram Singh after watching the historic events, predicted that the Khalsa was bound to suffer defeat due to "treachery and treason stalking its ranks."(3) The movement of his Regiment all over the ~~stricken~~ state had enabled him to come in contact with a large number of people. So in 1845, on the eve of the battle of Mudki, he left soldiering in order to meditate upon God's name (or NAM) and thus become one of the Namdharis. However in T.H. Thornton's report it was alleged that he quitted the army in 1846, i.e., on the taking of Lahore.(4)

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1. Dr. Gopal Singh,, History of the Sikh people, p. 605.
2. Ahluwalia, M.M., Kukas, p. 43.
3. Ibid., p. 43.
4. Document No. XI. A. quoted.

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From 1845 onwards Ram Singh took to his hereditary profession of a carpenter and in addition to that started running a grocery shop too. He used to supply foodgrains, cloth and articles of iron to the village folk at Bhainee. He also took to farming in partnership with some of his fellow-villagers; and led the life of an ideal farmer as well as an ideal man. He stuck to his profession till 1872.

Although busy with meditation and his family vocation, Ram Singh was very much exercised over the activities of the Christian missionaries in Panjab. Their proselytisation activities caused dread of conversion. He realised that the onslaught of Christianity, patronised by the new rulers was bound to corrode the moral and spiritual heritage of the Sikhs.

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Rapid spread of Christianity: - Subsequent to 1849 Ludhiana had become the chief centre of the Presbyterian church; and "Christian missionary centres came to be established in almost all important towns of the Panjab winning converts for Christianity in an organised manner....."[1] According to Lochlin, the Punjab church was developed to a very extent, by Christians from North-Eastern India, most of whom were mainly descendents of Dr. Alexander Duff's converts in his college in Calcutta.[2] In his view, the Sikhs, who had discarded the old idolatory of Hinduism, and broken the bonds of caste, they could "be considered to be in a favourable state to be influenced by the

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1. Dr. Genda Singh., The Indian Mutiny of 1852, p. 372.
2. Punjab Past and Present., Vol. II - I. p. 192. The History of Christianity in the Punjab - by Revd. C.H. Lochlin.

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preaching of Christian missionaries."① Besides these factors the development of Christian missions was aided by the officers of the Army and even some civilians. According to Lochlin, "they subscribed liberally to the support of the missions; and it is reported that an officer of the East Indias Company's army in Lahore made a gift of Rs. 10,000/- for such missionary work."②

No worder due to the overzealous missionary spirit of such Army Officers in Punjab and Colonel Wheeler in Barrackpore, there was consternation in the minds of sepoys of the Bengal Army. The same was further heightened by the encouragement offered by men at the top of East India Company's administration, including Lord Dalhousie. As early as March 1853, Dalhousie wrote to Sir George Couper, "A strange and interesting event has now to be recorded in the history of India, for it is well worthy of aplace there - I mean the baptism of Maharaja Duleep Singh."③ He gloated when he wrote, "This is the first Indian of many who have succumbed to our power; or have acknowledged it, that has adopted the faith of the stranger." Imbued by such notions, Dalhousie did not hesitate to appland Dr. J.Login who was acting as guardian of the Prince at Fatehgarh; and felecitate the Maharaja on his baptism. Still more objectionable than this calculated connivance at his

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1. Newton, History of the A.P. Missions in India, Allahabad, 1886, p. 4.
2. Punjab, Past and Present, Vol. VII. 1. p. 192.
3. Correspondence of Maharaja Duleep Singh in the History of Freedom Movement in Punjab, Vol. III. pp. 57-58, Private letters of Dalhousie quoted.

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conversion was the removal of the long-standing ban on the slaughter of cows and sale of beef in the erstwhile Province of Punjab.

In view of the persistent and overzealous activities of the missionaries coupled with patronage from the topmost officials and dignitaries, the dread of conversion permeated the people of Punjab also. As pointed out by Fauja Singh, "After annexation, slander-our propaganda of Christian missionaries against Indian religions and the setting-up of a string of slaughter-houses for the supply of beef, a phenomenon strictly forbidden under the Khalsa regime, made the Hindus and Sikhs realize the heavy loss that they had suffered by losing independence."①

In the words of Rev. M.A. Sherring the whole country of 200 millions of men had been claimed by the Christian Church; and "The whole land has been shaken by missions to its innermost centre. The Hindoo trembles for his religion, the Mahommedan for his ....."② Quite naturally Panjab could not remain immune from the baneful influence of the dread of proselytisation and the upsurge of the Kuka movement should be studied in this context.

5. Military situation in Panjab:- The actual Military Force in Panjab in May 1857, specially the presence

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1. A brief account of the Freedom Movement in the Panjab, pp. 7-8.
2. The Indian Church during the great Rebellion, (London 1858-59).

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of European soldiers, in propo~tion t_ the total military force in India on April, 1857 speaks for itself. As stated by Dr. (Mrs.) Dolores Domin the Panjab was under the occupation forces at its former strength with a high proportion of European troops, which made up half of the total British rank and file attached to the Bengal Army.[1] This was one of the major factors for absence of any sporadic outbrust in the Panjab and the cis-Sutlej Sikh States. However major part of the present Haryana, formerly eastern part of Panjab and Western Sector of the North-West Provinces, comprising of three divisions of Ambala, Thaneswar and Delhi were the scene of a full-fledged resurrection.[2] Although most of the territory had been given to the petty Chiefs for having rendered meritorious services to the British as against the Mughal Emperor and the Marathas; good many of them revolted. However the Sikhs chiefs of Jind, Ambala, Ladwa, Thaneswar, Buria, Kalsia and Kaithal who had been left to continue as independent chiefs on the Maratha Sanads preferred to be loyal.[3]

But the military station at Ambala was the first to be infected and the sepoys posted there felt disturbed over the use of the greased Cartridges for the Enfield rifle. According to Metcalfe, a cashiered British military officer from Meerut, who after having embraced Islam visited Ambala, Ludhiana and Ferozepur telling sepoys not to use the

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1. A study on the Role of the Sikhs in the People's Rising - /published by Akademic - Berlin 1977/ pp. 4 & 99.
2. Yadav, K.C., The Revolt of 1857 in Haryana, pp. 1-13; and The Famine Report 1860-61.
3. Cunningham, History of the Sikhs, pp. 124-29., 353-56.

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cartridges. He stated that the cartridges were smeared with the fat of pigs and cows; and the company's Government wanted to take away their caste.(1) Subsequently On the morning of Sunday, May 10, 1857, about nine hours before the outbreak at Meerut, the 3rd 60th Native Infantry revolted at Ambala.(2) They were followed by the 5th N.I. at noon.

But the promptitude of the British ~~xxxx~~ authorities at Ambala nipped the above revolt in the bud. They were too alert to be caught in the trap and thus checked the Ambala sepoys from gaining success and joined their brethren from Meerut at Delhi. Incidently Forsyth, was the Deputy Commissioner of Ambala in 1857 and later on rose to be the Commissioner and Superintendent of the Ambala Division, when the Kukas revolted under Guru Ram Singh.

Analysing the various factors which were responsible for less active role of the Sikhs during 1857-59, Dolores Domen has mentioned the following :-(3)

"(i) The mode and amount of pensions granted to former Khalsa soldiers admit an interesting insight into the British policy of appeasement.

(ii) political hostility of the Sikhs towards the Mughal Empire and its enthroned representative, Bahadur Shah II.

(iii) Ill-feeling between the Punjabis and Hindustanis ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ in general and Sikhs and Hindustani sepoys in particular.

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1. Metcalf, Two Narratives of the Mutiny at Delhi, pp.39-41.
2. Yadav: p. 49.
3. India in 1857-59, - p. 186.

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(iv) the Khalsa Army had been disbanded and replaced by the Gurkhs, Poorbiya and Muslim sepoys. Forts were demolished and people disarmed.

Between 1853-57 John Laurence, the first Chief Commissioner of Panjab followed a policy of appeasement. He conciliated the Sikh Sardars to a great extent and provided handsome allowances to numerous dependents of the Lahore Durbar. Even "Grants and endowments of the Sikh Holy places - the Gurdwaras of Amritsar, Nankana Saheb, Taran Taran and Ka Anandpur were confirmed."(1) In the words of Fauja Singh, "The principal Sikh assistance came from the rulers of Patiala, Nabha and Jind States;" rather than from the members of the Sikh community.(2) However on the other hand According to a Parliamentary paper of the year 1859. (No. 238, p. 18) "..... Universal revolt in the Panjab would have broken out, if Delhi had not fallen soon into our hands." This view is fully substantiated by mass of source material unearthed since 1957, the Centenary year of 1057.

16.

Reactions of Ram Singh: - Although initially Guru Ram Singh concentrated on moral and spiritual awakening; by 1857 he had veered round to preparing his followers "for a struggle against British imperialism."(3) In this resolve he was assisted by one Baba Kaka Singh who held the rank of a Havildar in which Ram Singh had also served previously. So he started preaching "the Sikh gospel with much vigour both to fight the onslaught of Christianity and also the evil political and cultural moves (dress and liqour and meat) and even the post office

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1. Narang and Gupta., History of the Punjab, 1500-1858, p. 383.
2. Kuka Movement., p. 176.
3. Ahluwalia, M.M., Kuka Movement., p. 9.

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and the railway train ."[1] In his reforming zeal he generated greater fervour than he could control; and estranged even the otthodox Sikhs. "His devotees, however, much against his wishes, it appears, started committing excesses in their new-found zeal, especially against idol-worship and cow-killing."[2] He decided to make use of the techinque, methods and principles of Guru Gobind Singh, even though the conditions were different under the British from the times of the Mughals.

Irrespective of the consequences, Guru Ram Singh went ahead and took the first step on the Baisakhi day, i.e. April 13, 1857 at Bhaini. Before an august assembly "..... a flag was unfurled followed by administration of baptism to five Sikhs."[3] The flag was trianguler in shape and white in colour, and became the symbol of the freedom struggle. In order to recreate the spirit of Guru Gobind Singh, the baptism ceremony on the occasion was christened . "Khande da Amrit" (nector of the sword). As the keeping of the Kirpan had been disallowed, the disciples were commanded to keep a heavy lathi. And inorder to have a distinct entity each one of them was ordered to keep a woollen rosary, put on white dress and have a white turban tied in a straight manner.[4] The brotherhood ~~by 1863~~ thus became distinguishable from the rest of the people "by the tie of their turban sheeda pug, by a watchward, by a necklace

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1. Singh, Dr. Gopal., History of the Sikh People, pp. 605-606.
2. Ibid., 606.
3. Fauja Singh Bajwa., Kuka Movement., p. 19; Also Document No. 1, Gooroo Ram Singh and the Kuka Sikhs (1863-71), pp. 1-10.
4. Ibid., p. 20.

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of Knots made in a white woolien cord to repeat beads and which are worn by all the community.[1] His fame had spread rapidly and by 1863 he had been able to recruit as many as 40,000 disciples, "Whose unity, oneness of purpose, love of the Guru and moral tone were so pronounced that the English felt shaken."[2] His rank and file swelled as a result of the 1857 resurrection; and good many Sikh sepoys became his disciples. "One of Guru Ram Singh's most important Subas, namely Brahma Singh, was a mutinous sepoy of 1957."[3]

According to earliest intelligence reports of the Police department of Sialkot, an elderly Sikh of Ludhiana, calling himself as "BHAI.", "was going about the country with 200 men, whom he drilled at night with sticks instead of muskets; that he boasted of 5000 followers and obeyed no Hakim ....."[4]. The D.S.P. Firozpur in June 1863 termed his activities as seditious, as they were proclaiming that the country would soon be theirs, and they would soon have 125,000 armed men to back them.[5] All sorts of malicious reports by secret agents of the Police department polluted the mind of the high officials and the Panjab Government issued orders directing Ram Singh to remain in his village. The Police was directed to keep themselves informed and report direct to Government on his proceedings.[6]

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1. Home Dept. Jud. Pro., August 1872, Nos. 273-284.
2. Ahluwalia, M.M., Kukas, p. 54.
3. Ibid., p. 54.
4. Document No. 1. Gooroo Ram Singh and the Kuka Sikhs - pp. 1-2. Report of Macnabb, D.C. dt. April 5.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

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The Government held that although Ram Singh was endeavouring to effect a reform in the Sikh religion and his preaching did not constitute a sedition; yet the assemblies of his disciples at Amritsar, however peaceful, could turn unlawful and create disturbance. So they were to be prohibited.

The Deputy Commissioner, Ludhiana in his report dated July 6th 1863 explained at length that Ram Singh on meeting him asserted "that his doctrines and preaching were of a religious and moral, not a political character"[1] Even then he was warned against holding any assembly at Amritsar. He also forbade him from his leaving the village without permission. Ram Singh readily acquiesced in all that the D.C. said. The action taken under the orders of the Panjab Government was duly approved by the Governor-General on July 23rd 1863.[2] The necessity of continued vigilance in watching his doings was emphasised by all.

Inspite of the strictest police surveillance on Ram Singh, the Kuka movement continued to gain momentum. He was alleged to have been gifted with magical powers and all sorts of prophecies of revival of Sikh rule gained currency. It was alleged that on hearing the shouts of 125,000 Kookas, the ~~christens~~ Christians would desert their wives and fly from the country; and no Feringee would be left alive. Right upto 1866 restrictions on Ram Singh's movements continued. Even when he visited

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1. Documents No. IV. (1863-1871). pp. 12-14.
2. Document No. V. p. 14.

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Anandpur, Keshgarh and Amritsar British Officers dogged his steps. In March 1866 some restrictions were removed as they felt assured of the harmlessness of Ram Singh's activities and his preachings.(1)

Liberty curtailed again : -- Hardly a few months had elapsed when the Commissioner and Superintendent; Ambala proposed reimposition of restrictions on the free movements of Ram Singh.(2) The gravamen was that the sect was mischievous and his followers were acting in a seditious manner. It was recommended that Ram Singh might be arrested and Kukaism be forbidden in the ranks of the Police and Army. Kooka hold in the Sikh States of Nabha and Patiala, was to be counteracted. As these two states were torn with dissensions, the Kookas had gained a foothold there. The fanatical devotion of the Kookas to their Guru alarmed the authorities. It was surmised that Ram Singh might have "commenced as a mild religious reformer on the fashion of Nanuk but his stirring Lieutenants are hurrying him into a more near imitation of the warlike Gooroo Gobind." The Government of India felt so much alarmed that it informed even the Secretary of State for India on Oct. 8, 1866 that "the movements of the sect should be carefully watched," and as a measure of precaution they intended to garrison the Fort of Ludhiana with two companies of a Goorkha Regiment.(3)

Subsequent to the above-mentioned communication followed a spurt of secret reports, surveys about the

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1. Lt. Governor's Order No. 356, dt. March 18, 1866.
2. Document No. VI. pp. 15-19.
3. Document No. X. pp. 22-23. For. Pol. Despatch No.171 enclosing the report of Col. R.G. Taylor.

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sect, which disclosed details of secret Kuka Postal system; and details about Ram Singh's trade against the Christians. Donovan's reports disclose an exaggerated version of all his activities.(1) According to a recent historian, Donovan's reports were actuated more by his anxiety to secure reward and consideration for his informer than by stating the truth. The report of I.G. Police (Panjab) submitted subsequently corroborated the same when it said, "Whilst Ram Singh was in quasi-confinement at Bhainee there was a charm of mystery and ecstacy about the man, to which our espionage perhaps added a spice of fascinating persecution. All this was calculated to attract the susceptible".(2)

- 8 -

Contacts with Nepal:- According to Naha: Singh contacts of Sikhs with Rana Jung Bahadur started as early as 1850, when he declared war on Tibet and defeated the Tibetans.(3) The latter were made to surrender all the Sikh prisoners of the Lahore durbar; who on reaching Khatmandu, started training the forces of the Rana. With the arrival of Rani Jindan Kaur at Khatmandu the contacts of Kookas increased with the Nepalese authorities.

In 1868 Hira Singh and Kishan Singh, conveyed details about Namdharis to the Rana. Exchange of gifts between Guru Ram Singh and the Rana followed. The former sent a few buffaloes and other animals as desired by the Nepal ruler. In return the Rana sent 500 rupees, a Tibetan horse, two Khukries, a shawl, and a rosary of

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1. For. Pol. Pro. A, Oct. 1868. No. 197.
2. Home Dept. Jud. Pro. - August 1872. Nos. 273-284.
3. Namdhari Itihas., pp. 110-111.

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108 beads (of Kantur-i-Mrig).

When the Britishers learnt of the above-mentioned activities, they pressurised the Nepal Government to put a stop to the activities of the Namdharis.[1] The Rana informed the British Resident that there were 3 lakhs of Kukas having faith in Ram Singh, their Guru. Details about the contacts of the Rana and Ram Singh; and rumours of enlistment of Kukas into the Regiments of the Kashmir Maharaja were recorded by the I.G. Police, Panjab in his report to the the Government of Panjab in January 1871.[2] When the Government of India was informed of such activities, it was ordered that the attempt of the Maharajas of Nepal and Kashmir to recruit the ranks of their armies from man of the Kuka sect, was to be very carefully watched.[3]

In July 1871, fresh orders were issued for strict surveillance on Ram Singh Kuka and his vizirs (Subas). Secrecy was to be observed in this respect. Subsequently it was reported that during the months of April and May, there was considerable excitement in the city of Amritsar on the subject of the slaughter of Kine. The same was accentuated by the exposure of beef for sale in the city. Although prompt measures were taken to allay the excitement, and amity established between Hindus and Muslims; yet On the 14th June night in a sudden attack on the slaughter - house near the city of Amritsar by an armed gang, 4 persons were killed, and three wounded. Next day a similar incident occurred at a village called Raikote in

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1. For. Dept. Pol. Pro. A. February 1872. Nos. 39-49.
2. Selected Paper No. XXIII - Document No. XXXVI, Memorandum - Police Report on the Kuka sect for 1870 - pp. 113-116.
3. Document No. XXXVIII - p. 118.

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the Ludhiana district. Two persons were killed. Assailments escaped in both the cases, and were alleged to have crossed into the Patiala State territory. However with the aid of the State officials they were arrested and after their confessions they were executed on August 5, 1871. Four more were sentenced to death and two sentenced to transportation for life.

Ram Singh and the murders: - On the basis of the evidence of the informer, and the confession of Baela Singh, it was surmised that the murders had been pre-planned. But it was also disclosed that some of the Kukas joined the attack unwillingly as their Guru had bade them. In his statement before the Commissioner, Jullundur Division, recorded at Ludhiana on January 8th 1872, Ram Singh had ~~xxxxx~~ clearly stated : -

"..... The facts are that Kukas used to ask me for the murder of butchers. I always forbade them."(1)

When Heera Singh and Lehra Singh of Sakrondia Illaqua, Patiala or Nabha and Nand Singh of Hudyaya, told him about their intentions "to show their ~~xx~~ colours" (रंग ज़हूर करेंगे Rang Zahur Karanje) he forbade them, "but they became unmanageable, and would not mind me ....."(2)

Inspite of the ~~xxxxxxx~~ of the district officials the Lieutenant - Governor of the Panjab considered that

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1. Home Dept. Pro. June, 1872, No. 112. Appendix I. p. 17.
2. Ibid.

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"It will be difficult, and may be impossible, to ~~an~~ obtain against Guru Ram Singh any such evidence, as would warrant his prosecution in a criminal Court."[1] The Commissioner Ambala Division had earlier communicated that the complicity of Ram Singh in the outrage had not been thoroughly enquired into, yet it was considered "absolutely necessary" that he may be deported from the Panjab. According to T.D. Forsyth Ram Singh had admitted in his statement that "he never gave any clue to the Government Officers," about the activities of his followers; as he was ignorant of their laws. In the opinion of Guru Ram Singh, as he himself had forbidden his followers to abstain from murdering anybody, "there was no obligation resting on him to report the matter to Government....."[2] But this plea was totally unacceptable to the Commissioner, who thought that "To allow such a man to be at liberty " was in the highest degree dangerous. According to him the outrages committed by his followers at Malodh and the State of Malerkotla confirmed the above conviction.[3]

Subas of Guru Ram Singh: - In order to put the Namdhari organization on a permanent footing Guru Ram Singh appointed as many as 22 Subas and allotted them regions for functioning.[4] In the wrods of Ahluwalia,

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1. Home Dept. Judl. A. Cons. March 1872, Nos. 138-139. A. also Progs. June 1872, Nos. 112-132.
2. Home Dept. Judl. A. July 1872, Nos. 212-220; Forsyth's letter dt. Jan. 18. 1872.
3. Home Dept. Judl., Progs. June 1872. Nos. 112-132.
4. For. Dept. Pol. Pro. A. February 1868. Nos.202-3.

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"The Subas were not only his eyes and ears projected in the length and breadth of the Panjab, but also his spokesmen and representatives, for a regular contact was essential in such movements."(1)

But in 1871 one of the Subas, Brahma Singh became involved in seditious activities. He proclaimed that a war was to commence in October and November; and the Kukas were expecting help from the Rana of Nepal, the Rajas of Panjab and Kashmir. And he declared that 'Har Gobind Singh' had become Satguru, the day of fulfilment of their prophecies had come and the restoration of the Khalsa Raj was close at hand. The Police naturally proclaimed him as one of the mutinous sepoys or Sowars of 1857, who had adopted a religious disguise to escape identification. His speeches in the district of Gujranwala shortly after the Kuka attack on butchers at Amritsar were taken note of by the Police.(2) He was charged for preaching sedition and inciting rebellion.

The action of the Subas and other Kukas were aggravated due to indiscreet orders of the Panjab authorities to allow sale of beef in the public. Riots occured and the authorities failed to control them, and remained lukewarm to the protests against kine-killing. On the other hand the flourishing leather trade in Amritsar accentuated slaughter of even young calves for better quality of hides. Muslim traders profited by that. The

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1. Kukas., p. 66.

2. Home Dept. Judl. Pro., August 1872, Nos. 273-284.

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Hindus and Sikhs protested and riots followed. The authorities adopted a pro-Muslim attitude and increased communal bitterness.

The situation was aggravated due to the vow of the Kukas to seek vengeance against the butchers. Guru Ram Singh as scenting the danger forbade them against such acts; but they would not listen to him. When the Amritsar incident had occurred and innocent persons had been made to confess, although they were innocent, Guru Ram Singh directed the real assassins to surrender. On their confessions they were hanged and mounted the gallows as martyrs to their cause.[1] According to some historians this version about Guru Ram Singh's innocence is based on popular belief and needed documentary support.[2]

When the attack on Butchers at Raikot repeated the same story on July 15, 1871, the Government decided to fix the responsibility on Guru Ram Singh. He was charged for conniving at the murders. But after good deal of deliberations they found that they could not implicate Guru Ram Singh in a Court of Law due to lack of evidence.

The Government of the Panjab in a communication to the then Maharaja of Patiala stated: -

"xxxxxx2. I, therefore, write for His Honour's information that from many proofs it is certain that Ram Singh's real motive and ambition was to reign and

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1. Sant Nihhan Singh Alam, Krabti-kari Sat-Guru, p. 129.

2. Fauja Singh, Kuka Movement., p. 80.

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acquire dominions, and he deceitfully implanted this capricious notion in the minds of his ignorant and superstitions followers ....."[1]

Writing about the Act of Cow killing L.H. Griffin Officiating Secretary to the Government of Panjab likened the agitation to that of the 'Cartridge' issue which led to 1857 revolt and justified the deterrent punishment inflicted on the Kukas in 1871 and 1872. Even Maharaja of Patiala was also inclined to think that, under the religious pretext, Ram Singh was putting into commotion the entire region, as was done by leaders in 1857.[2]

Maler Kotla incident: - On the basis of evidence collected in the course of investigation of Raikot murders, the Government came to the conclusion that Guru Ram Singh was "the main force behind the butcher-killing movement."[3] Immediate deportation was demanded by Ambala officials, I.W. Macnabb, and Lt. Col. G. McAndrew. Action was proposed against Ram Singh under Regulation III of 1818. Although the Government of Panjab had turned down such proposals in 1871; after the attacks on Malodh and Malerkotla, they could not desist from arresting him and his Subas and deporting them out of Panjab just a year after.

The Lieutenant-Governor telegraphed to the Governor-General on 16th January 1872 that he had authorised the arrest of Ram Singh and his prominent Subas. Approval of the action came the same day in the evening.[4] But the

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1. Home Dept. Judl. Pro., June 1872, Nos. 107-111 : Also see Maharaja Patiala's letter to the Panjab Government, dt. February 12, 1872 regarding Guru Ram Singh's motives.
2. Fauja Singh., Kuka Movement., p. 76.
3. Home Dept. Judl., Progs. June 1872, Nos. 112-132.
4. Ibid , January 20, 1872, Nos. 55-71.

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Government of the Panjab telegraphed to the Home ~~Secretary~~ Secretary, Government of India, Calcutta, that they had: "No direct evidence against Ram Singh in this case sufficient to put him on his trial."[1] But the local officers, specially Cowan wanted to teach the Kukas a lesson. When all the Kuka prisoners had been brought to the Parade Ground at Malerkotla on January, 17, he got 49 of them blown away before the guns. One was cut to pieces while attacking the Deputy Commissioner. Cowan had already made up his mind on this unjust, unwarranted and unauthorised brutal act. When Forsyth the Commissioner at Ambala wrote to him to delay execution till he arrived; he ignored that order. He exultantly recorded this foul act in these words : -

"I put the note in my pocket and thought no more of it."[2] And in his letter dt. January 17th (No. 16) he explained away his conduct. Inspite of his brutal act of executing the Kukas without trial, Forsyth and the Lt. Governor subsequently approved his action. The latter regarded "Blowing from Gun as an Impressive and Merciful Manner of Execution."[3]

When the matter was reported to the Government of India, he telegraphed back on January 19th 1872 the following orders : -

"Stop any summary execution of Kookas without your express orders."[4] Ahluwalia is right in commenting

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1. Ibid., February, 1872, Nos. 7-20.
2. Home Dept. Judl. Pro., June 1872. Nos. 112-132.
3. Ahluwalia, M.M., Kukas., pp. 94-107: Also Home Dept. Judl. Pro. July 1872. Nos. 208-11.
4. See Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 1872. Feb. 29, 1872. pp. 1157-8.

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that, had these orders not been issued many more Kukas would have have been likewise executed. The Government of India informed the Secretary of State on February 17, 1872 that the D.C. "illegally blew away 49 from guns."(1) On the arrived of the Commissioner others were tried legally and 16 others were hanged. The mode of execution was ~~kkkpk~~ kept back and even the Government of India remained in the dark.

The Government of India took a serious view of the matter and pointed out to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Panjab: "The prisoners were absolutely helpless. A large proportion of them badly wounded ..... Under these circumstances their illegal and indiscriminate execution was a measure for which there was no excuse."(2)

It was directed that Cowan be removed from service; and Forsyth was censured.(3) The latter was transferred from Panjab to Rajasthan and was deemed unfit to hold any political ~~assignment~~ assignment in future. Although Forsyth tried to enlist the support of Maharaja of Patiala and various other Christians as well as loyalists, his censure was not ~~xx~~ withdrawn. And Cowan faced his own trial, and suffered.(4)

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Deportation of Ram Singh:- The detention of Guru Ram Singh and ten of his influential Subas was approved by the Secretary of State for India vide Despatch No. 13, dt. March 26, 1872. In the meantime he had

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1. Home Dept. Judl. Pro., June 1872, No. 106.
2. Ibid. June 1872, Nos. 112-132.
3. Ibid.
4. Ahluwalia, M.L., Kukas. pp. 101-105.

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already been whisked away from Panjab to Allahabad; where he was confined in the fort under a double guard.[1] The Pioneer (Allahabad) however commented: "We have heard it asked why, if Ram Singh, Kuka Guru, did the Government the service of warning them of the late rising he was seized and sent off like a criminal to Allahabad. The reason, we believe, is that he did not make his report until it was superfluous - that is, ~~xxx~~ until the rising had taken place."[2]

After seizure of Ram Singh, about 150 Kukas were rounded up at Bhainee, where he resided. Most of them had come for the Lohri fair or a festival at Bhainee.[3] Some were released on bail others sent to jail. One of them who acted as Khazanchi (Treasurer) of Ram Singh was also in charge of the granary at Bhainee, which had enormous stock. He too was released on furnishing security and released thereafter. It was rumoured that a large amount of treasure had been concealed some-where near Ram Singh's house; but all search for that ended without success.[4]

Having failed to get anything incriminating at the Kukas headquarters at Bhainee, the Government of Panjab felt convinced that if they were tried in the Court /~~xxxx~~ of Law and "the trial failed, the consequences would be very unfavourable to the preservation of public peace." But in order to keep a vigil on the Kukas they established a police outpost at Bhainee, which became

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1. The Englishman (Calcutta); January 24, 1872.
2. Ibid. January 31, 1872. Reproduced.
3. Held on Maker Sankrant day every year - normally on January ., 14.
4. The Englishman, February 14, 1872; quoted from Indian Public Opinion; Also Documents - Camp. Nahar Singh (1872), pp. 245-7.

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a running sore to his family members.(1)

So in utter desperation the Government ordered that Ram Singh and his Subas be kept as far away from Panjab as possible. In the first instance they were lodged in Allahabad Fort; but that being considered nearer to Panjab, Ram Singh was sent to Calcutta enroute Rangoon, According to a contemporary report he arrived in Calcutta as a state prisoner in March 1872 and was immediately sent on to Rangoon.(2)

There was widespread condemnation of the Kuka executions and deportion of Ram Singh and his Subas. One trooper rightly wrote a letter to the Editor of The Friend of India (Calcutta) saying that ".....the European public now a daye are rather given to panics." Their analogy of Kuka revolt with the 1857 was ridiculous. According to him things were different then as "..... a handful of Europeans armed with the old Musket, with the exception of the Madras Fusiliers under the gallant old Neill, with forts, aresenals and artillary in the possession of a Native Army nearly tuice as numerous ~~x~~ as the present ....."(3)

While satisfaction was expressed at the Government of India's disapproval of Summary executions; suprise was expressed as to why the local officials in Panjab were allowed to ignore the orders to try Guru Ram Singh and his Subas in the Court of Law.(4) It was really a

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1. Fauza Singh: Kuka Movement. pp. 117-121.
2. The Englishman, (Calcutta). March 14, 1872.
3. dt. February, 1872. Letter from Havelock's Trooper, Allahabad, 30th January, 1872. Quoted in Documents (1872) pp. 250-252.
4. Home Dept. Judl. Proas. - June 1874, No.279-365.

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pity that the then Viceroy Northbrook failed to get the orders enforced; with the result that the Kuka's oppression and injustices on them continued unabated; and pious as well as innocent Ram Singh rotted in Rangoon and Mergui jails.

13. Under Detention in British Burma: - From March 1872 to the end of November, 1885 Guru Ram Singh lived in Burma. A lot of correspondence ensued between the Chief Commissioner and the Government of India in 1872 regarding the lodging arrangements to be made for the State prisoner and also adjustment of the charges incidental to the detention of Kuka Chief Ram Singh.①

It was suggested by the Chief Commissioner, Burma that Ram Singh be located in the building that was being used as Cantonment Post Office, which was situated close to the main guard and was "the house in which the late ex-king of Delhi was confined."②

The total monthly cost of maintaining the State prisoner, including furniture and servants; -- three Hindoo prisoners, one sweeper -- their labour being calculated at Rupees 5 a month for each prisoner; was estimated at Rs. 102-8-3. According to the I.G. of Prisons the following expenditure was actually incurred on the "State prisoner Guru Ram Singh" :③ --

1	Cow	Rs. 75.
2.	Food and servants ...	Rs. 40 p.m.

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1. Home Dept. Judl. December 1872. Nos. 240-41.
2. Ibid. Progs. May, 1872 No. 13, and June 1872, ~~Nos~~ Nos. 87-88.
3. Ibid: Letter No. 312 of April 5, 1872 quoted by Maclaurin etc. pp. 151-152. Kuka

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3. Shoes and Clothing Rs.40/- (purchased).

4. Chair, table, pankha Rs.50/- (spent).

5. 3 High Caste Hindu prisoners, besides one servant who arrived with the prisoner from India Provided.[1]

When the matter was discussed by the Viceroy's Executive Council, Northbrook is reported to have offered to ".....put him into a separate house and give him the pony carriage, telling him that there indulgences would be withdrawn if he is discovered in correspondence with his adherents elsewhere.....[2] The proposal of ~~prxxdin~~ providing a pony carriage having been opposed, the same was modified thus _____ A carriage was to be occasionally hired for outdoor exercises if medical openion advised that.

14. Restrictions on Correspondence :- As State prisoner Guru Ram Singh was not allowed to communicate with his friends in the Panjab. When a sealed letter from him to the address of one Gopal Singh in the Panjab, and Budh Singh at Bhainee, was detected, the Government took action. They get them translated but found that the same appeared to be of a very harmless description. The matter related to physical welfare, supplies of food etc. and Rangoon town. It contained advice to both of them to live together amicably; and if any buffaloes, bulls or cows received as offering, were to be disposed of

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1. Ahluwalia, M.M., Kukas, pp. 151-152.

2. Home Dept. Judl, Progs. May 1872, No. 13.

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in the name of the Guru: they were not to keep them. They were to get the Granth Saheb read for his welfare and two or four cows were to be given away to the Brahmins.[1]

Inspite of the instructions regarding strict surveillance over Kuka prisoners, the Panjab Government learnt to its dismay that some correspondence was going on between the Guru and his disciples. On October 12, 1877, L.H. Griffin, Offtg. Secretary wrote to the Secretary to Government of India that "Ram Singh does frequently correspond with his followers in the Panjab. Several copies of such letters have been confidentially made over to this Government."[2]

According to the Panjab Government the correspondence had led to a large number of petitions, for the release of the Guru, being submitted to the Lieutenant-Governor. This clearly showed that surveillance over Ram Singh as State Prisoner was very imperfect. It was further alleged that a Bairagi faqir living close to the place of confinement was the means of communication. According to their information it was easy to throw letters attached to stones or clods of earth, over the walls, and to get back replies in the same manner.[3] Although the letters connected chiefly of enquiries about, and advices to the workers of the Kuka sect and Receipt of such letters had caused unusual activity in the Kuka Sect. Therefore Ram Singh's removal to some other place was suggested, so that his followers might not establish any contact with him.

Investigation was also extended to other Kuka prisoners also who were lodged in Aden, Assergash, Moulmein and Chunar Fort. Saheb Singh who had been trans-

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1. Home Dept, Judl., September 1872. Nos. 144-147.
2. Ibid., November, 1877, Nos. 7-8. Letter No. 428. Conf. Misc. H. Pro. Aug. 01. No 11-7. Correspondence between Ram Singh & Kuka prisoners and some of his followers.
3. Ibid. H. Pro August 1879 Nos 257-257

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transferred from Aden to the European jail at Hazaribagh to be kept in close custody died on June 10 1879. His companion Kabu Singh became lonely in the jail, comprising a whole wing of 16 cells. As he was a weak, decrepit old man of over 70 years, it was proposed that he might be allowed to live in Police Lines, but the same was disapproved. The man reason being that his stay there would have provided 'direct and easy means of communication with the outer world.' Subsequently it was proposed that he might be transferred to one of the criminal wards of the Central Jail at Hazaribagh. As an alternative it was proposed to transfer him to Chunar Fort.(1)

Inspite of the precautions taken by the Panjab Government the Kuka movement continued to gain momentum and when there was a scare of Afghan War in 1877-78 their activities increased mainfold. In 1879 Kooka Gurucharan Singh was reported to be active in Russian Turkistan, as an emissary of Guru Ram Singh. On May 1st he was found in possession of a Hindi letter purporting to be from Ram Singh and signed by several others.(2) In this the Guru was represented as the spiritual leader of 3,15,000 Kukas, all brave soldiers. Due to the activities of the secret agent Gulab Khan for and against the Russians during the Second Afghan War and afterwards, Gurcharan Singh and Shanker Rai were arrested.

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1. Home Dept. Judl. B. February 1880, Nos. 219-225.
2. For. Dept. Pol. Sec. Pro. January 1882, Nos. 558-599 also Ahluwalia, p. 116. Kuka.

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In short the Kukas had succeeded in making important contacts with the Russians in Central Asia. One Bishen Singh Arora, a Kuka of great wealth, was reported to be having agencies in Peshawar, Kabul, Bokhara and Russian territory, and acted as the medium of communication between the Russians and Budh Singh.(1)

In order to cloak their failure to check the activities of the Kukas in India as well as abroad, the Government of India once again unleashed its wrath on Guru Ram Singh.

Removal from Rangoon ordered :- On the persistent demand of the Panjab Government, the Government of India directed the Chief Commissioner of British Burma to remove Guru Ram Singh either to Tavoy or Mergui.(2) Consequently the Chief Commissioner vide his letter No. 164/6-P. dt. May 29, 1878 ordered his removal under a guard of 7 men. As no suitable accomadation was available at Mergui, orders were issued for the construction of a new residence. It was however suggested that instead of sending him to Mergui he might either be better looked after at Rangoon or removed to the settlement of Camorta in the Nicobars. Subsequently his removal to Table Land was also mooted, when he could be cut off from the visits and letters of his friends. But all this took time.(3)

The Panjab Government further reported that in August 1879, Ram Singh was able to obtain writing material, and send letters to his friends and adherents in

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1. Ibid., August 1889. F. Progs. Nos. 114-115, for details see Ahluwalia, pp. 128-134.
2. Home Dept. Judl. Pro. January 1878. Nos. 138-9.
3. Home Judl. A. Proc. August 1881. Nos 146-9 Transfer of Ram Singh, the Kuka leader to Table Island which formed one of the Coco group.

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the Panjab. He was also reported to have seen and communicated with a visitor from the Panjab.(1) However on further reference the Panjab Government opined that they were not interested in the location of his stay -- detention or even jail -- what they were interested in was that "the communication between him and his adherents should be stopped as completely as possible."(2) At one time the Viceroy after due consideration agreed to his detention at Rangoon with greater and stricter control. His communication stated -- "----- On the otherhand it is undesirable, for various reasons, to treat a deteneu of Ram Singh's class with harshness if this can be avaided ....."(3)

Ultimately Guru Ram Singh was removed to Mergui in 1880. He travelled by 'Ananda' and arrived there on 21st October 1880. A new house had been built for him; it had a small kitchen as well as latrine.

But the urge in Guru's disciples was so great that two Kukas, named Minhan Singh and Samund Singh succeeded in reaching Mergui by P.S. Tavoy from Moulmein.(4) It is on record that between 1879-1881 several of his disciples made attempts to reach Rangoon and Mergui to either see their Guru or convey letters to him.(5)

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1. Ibid., February, 1880, Nos. 54-55.
2. Home Dept. Judl. B. Pro. March 1880, Nos. 36-37. letter No. 743. Conf. dt. Feb. 20.
3. Home Dept. Rev. & Agr. Judl. dt. March 1880. Conf. letter No. 270 to the Chief Commissioner, Burma.
4. Ahluwalia. M.M., Kukas. p. 156.
5. Home Dept. Judl B. October 1881. Nos. 184-195. Correspondence between Ram Singh and some of his followers.

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In Mergui - Even while in confinement at Mergui, Guru Ram Singh continued to be a headache to the Government of India. The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of British Burma informed the Government of India that Ram Singh's conduct had not been good. He was reported to have been very violent at times, and one occasion "it was found necessary to confine him to his own room."[1] Subsequent to solitary confinement his general health had been good.

Guru Ram Singh felt very unhappy at the treatment meted out by the British Government to his disciples who only wanted to correspond with him. He not only felt anxious to meet his people, but also became worried about their safety. As he anticipated their arrest, confinement or harassment, he always discouraged their visits to him either at Rangoon or Mergui. But his entreaties proved futile and he continued to decline in health, pining for Satsgat (reunion) with his disciples, colleagues and relatives.

The end: - According to the report of the Civil Surgeon, dt. November 29, 1885, Ram Singh, State prisoner, died at 4-30 P.M. He had several attack of Diarrhoea since 22nd November, and all efforts to induce him to take medicine had proved futile. Due to old age his constitution was on the breaking point and he died quite exhausted on November 29, in the presence of the Civil Surgeon.[2]

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1. Home Dept. Judl. B. August 1882. Nos. 320-321, letter No. 119/35 P. dt. Rangoon Aug. 7. Report on the conduct and health of certain Kuka prisoner in Mergui and Moulmein jails.
2. Ibid - September 1885. Nos. 22-24. See Appendix - H
3. Home Dept. Judl. - A. Progs. December 1885. Nos. 252-53 Report of the Civil Surgeon, Mergui, No. 99.

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The cremation of his body was performed the same day. In his subsequent report dt. December 2nd the Civil Surgeon stated that his ashes were collected in a new earthen vessel and confined to the river. The cremation ceremony was performed according to the Hindu customs.

When the news of the death was telegraphed to Calcutta and publicized, the Kukas refused to believe the reported death. All sorts of rumours about his escape from Mergui were circulated and miracles were alluded to him. The statements of some of the high officials of the Government of India were alleged to be conflicting so far as his death was concerned.(1)

18. An estimate: - Guru Ram Singh death in the jail in the far off Mergia gave him the hale of a martyr; and his sacrifice for the cause received wide applause. He lived and died for a cause. His noble disposition; upright character and pious nature won for him universal admiration. His innocence and truthfulness was applauded even by his persecutors. In the words of Ahluwalia, "During those fourteen long winters of exile in Burma, he continued to uphold the flag which he had raised in the year 1857."(2)

Panjab in 1857 was in the most critical phase of its history; the organization of the Khalsa Army had been completely broken. The disbanded Sikh soldiers quietly cast their "swords into plough-shares, and their

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1. Ahluwalia, M.M., Kukas. pp. 170-173.
2. Kukas., p. 174.

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spears into pruning hooks.(1) The Sikh soldiery had very quickly adapted themselves to the changed surroundings; so much so that in 1852 the Sikh Regiments even volunteered to go to Burma and fight under the British flag. In the words of Pandit Nehru, "It is certainly to the credit of the British that they could winover the Sikhs in this way; whether it is to the eredit or discredit of the Sikhs of those days depends upon one's point of view."(2)

In such a state of transition it was no doubt a herculean task for Guru Ram Singh to infuse a new life in the Sikh community and reverse the march of events. But subsequent events did show that he opposed foreign rule tooth and nail; he gave an organization to the Kuka movement; he infused a religious fervour in his disciples; and had the courage as well as conviction in the restoration of the Khalsa Rule in the Panjab. He fully emphasised the religious aspect of the movement and his letters even from jail were devoted to moral resurgence of the Namdharis.(3)

From the beginning to the end Guru Ram Singh emphasised the importance of Bani and the recitation of Bhajan etc. H e exhorted each and every one of the Namdharis to be firm in worship of the Creator and stick to the truth. He had implicit faith in God and reminded his disciples that God was not far off. They were only to raise their lamentations day and night; He alone could hear and answer.

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1. Malleson, G.B., Recreations of an Indian Official, p. 44.

2. Discovery of India., p. 384.

3. Home Dept. Cult. 11 Oct. 1861. pp. 16-19. Letters from Ram Singh jointly on Dhan Singh of Gumti

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In one of his letters he even advised his disciples to bear patiently ill-treatment even at the hands of the rulers. While performing Bhajan and reciting Bani they were to have implicit faith in the Guru, who alone was capable of removing their difficulties. He fearlessly advocated social reforms, e.g. excommunication of those who were guilty of infanticide. Liquidation of debts and return of loans was also emphasised. He advised the farmers to look to their plough, which was useless if that did not work. He appealed to his brethren to give food, drink, clothing to the poor and the hungry.

Guru Ram Singh never allowed personal considerations to gain precedence. Although he pined for Sangat (Meeting) with his disciples, but he always advised them not to visit him in for off places as they was likely to involve them into trouble. Even in strict personal matter of Atarkaur (Atri) who had been offered to Ram Singh in marriage but he had refused the same, he denied any connection with her, when she claimed to be 'Guru's spiritual betrothed wife'. He is reported to have addressed her in these words : — "..... In the first place I am very old, and my beard has became white. In the second place, I am sitting thousands of miles away in custody bey and the seas.[1] Night and day he was surrounded by guards armed with muskets. If she really desired a husband, she was free to marry the son of a Sikh according to her choice

Guru Ram Singh's writings preserved in official records amply testify to the greatness of his soul.

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1. Home Dept. Judl. B. Progs. October 1881. Nos. 188-195.
Paper No. 9. f. 12. Also Home Dept. Judl. B Pro : 82. Nos 92-93 and July 1882. Nos 241 - 245 Ram Singh and Muasammat Atri D C Morgan's Letter dt May 2[illegible].

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The earliest reports of Col. R.G. Taylor, Donoʃan and others had warned the Government that the Kuka movement was rebellions and was assuming all-India character. In their words "..... the whoʃ place" was then "boilʃling for christian blood." But apart from giving the Guru-Mantra or sacred initiation verse, Ram Singh never advocated murders or massacres. He enjoined upon his disciples every kind of sacrifice, either for religion or political ventures. It is however clear that the organization that he was building up was ʃprimaʃily for moral re-surgence rather than political upheavel. Having seen the debacle in the Sikh War, and after witnessing the failure of 1857 revolt, it was ridiculous to expect that Ram Singh could dream of an armed resurrection. His motive from firʃt to last was enshrined in theʃe words:= "First consent to death, give up the desire to live, become the dust of the earth, then come to me." As pointed out by Ahluwalia, the "Namdhari Guru stood for ~~boycott~~ co-operation with the Government as for Swadeshi."① Enancipation of his followers and restoration of the glory of the Khalsa appeared to be his aim.

His outlook as exhibited in his Sakhis-prophecies were more or less religious and in the then atmosphere allusion to magic and Super-natural powers was quite common.② In one of his letters he wrote the following :-

"Oh Khalsa ! witness the doings and the workings of the creator and see what He brings forth ....."

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1. Kukas,, p. 138.
2. See Maharani Jind Kaur's letter found at the fort gate of Chunar on 19 April (1849) wherein she stated that, "She had managed to escape not with the help of any of her attendants but with the help of a spell....." quoted: Ahluwalia, M.L., The Punjab's Pioneer Freedom Fighters: Secret Consultation, 26 May 1849, No.133. /pp.96-97/

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This sort of implicit faith in God and expectancy of miracles was quite catching in those days. Ultimately even when he was dead at Mergki his followers would not believe it that. This sort of faith was both a source of strength and weakness to the movement. On the one hand it gave the movement a popular bias; but on the other it gave ample time and opportunity to the hard-hitting Britishers to crush the movement and nip in the bud all their conspiracies. Even the raids and searches at the Kuka headquarters at Bhainee revealed that there was no preparation for armed insurrection on a large scale.

It has been remarked by Fauja Singh that the Kuka Movement was a mass movement; whilst the 1857 was a feudal one. No doubt Guru Ram Singh aimed at a mass appeal, but his reforming zeal and a change of lathi in place of a Kirpan did not appeal to the orthdox Sikhs. The Maharaja of Patiala, Nabha and others opposed the Kukas and helped in their arrests. Besides them even the newly created nobility in Panjab, including the Sikhs, lent no support to the movement. And having segregated itself from the then feudal barons, zemindars and princelings, the Kuka Subas weakened their own cause. The initial success of the 1857 outbreak and the protracted struggle for over two and a half years was the result of coalescing between the then feudal forces as well as resurgent Sepoys.

Various studies of the Kuka movement are available and their contribution to the Freedom Movement is unquestioned. But a comparative study of the forces behind the 1857 revolt and the Kuka uprisings would be profitable.

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However study and appraisal of Guru Ram Singh's remarkable carear reveals that he deserves to be classed amongst the archetects of our Freedom ~~Movement~~ Struggle. His purity of mind, his appeal to the conscience and his outspokenness, were no doubt the precursors of the subsequent contribution of men like Swami Vrajanand Saraswati, Swami Dayanand, Rama Krishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekanand and last but not the least Mahatma Gandhi. His role in revival as well as ~~reformation~~ resurrcation of socio-religious and even political life in Panjab was laudable. As a freedom-fighter, by his unending sacrifice and steadfastness, his carear afforded a beacon-light to revolutionaries in the later half of the nineteenth Century and the first half of the present century.

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